

Chairman Carpenter, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Federal and State Affairs Committee:

The City of Fairway is one square mile with 4,000 residents and 1,800 homes. Included in our small City are 12 acres of what remains of the 2,000 acres of the original Shawnee Indian Mission - the most historically significant site in the State of Kansas. The Shawnee Indian Mission is both a State Historic site and a National Landmark.

This site is rich in history for both the State of Kansas and all of the 22 tribes that attended the school - not just one tribe. That history will be shared with you by my colleagues.

In 2016, after many years of budget cuts to the State Historical Society, the Shawnee Indian Mission was on the verge of closing to the public. The City of Fairway stepped forward creating two partnerships - one with the State and one with the Shawnee Indian Mission Foundation. The agreement with the State shared operational responsibilities, with the City performing daily operations and the Historical Society preservation and capital maintenance. The public/private agreement with the Foundation shared financial funding for the site. Both partnerships exist today.

Fairway and the surrounding communities have made strong financial commitments to the Mission for many years. Volunteers spend thousands of hours donating their time to make the Mission what it is today.

Educational opportunities serve hundreds of school children each year as well as large groups and individuals. Our goal is to expand the educational offerings of the Mission to include all 22 tribes inviting them to share their individual histories and preserve their legacies. The first organizational meeting was held a few months ago with another planned during the first quarter of this year.

I, respectfully, ask that you cast a no vote on HB 2208 retaining ownership of the Shawnee Indian Mission with the State.

Respectfully submitted.

Melanie J. Hepperly, Mayor of Fairway, Kansas